
Rainbow Coalition in the Golden State? Exposing Myths, Uncovering New Realities in Latino Attitudes Towards Blacks

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Abstract: During the 1970s and 80s Blacks and Latinos appeared on the verge of forming a rainbow coalition. Cities such as Los Angeles, Denver, and New York that had sizable minority populations witnessed Black-Brown coalitions in the election of African American and Mexican American mayors. However since 1980 the Latino population has doubled in size from 20 million to 40 million, and surpassed Blacks as the largest minority group in the United States. As a result, many now question the rainbow coalition, and instead suggest that the two minority groups are in direct competition with one another. Indeed, this is the conclusion of McClain et. al.'s (2006) recent article on inter-group conflict in North Carolina that Latinos do not trust African Americans and coalitions are unlikely. We argue that in California, this is not necessarily the case, and that a majority of Latinos do not view Blacks with suspicion or as competitors, but rather as potential partners. Using data from the Latino National Survey (2006), for the state of California, and Los Angeles Metro, we test a model of Black-Brown competition to determine what factors cause Latinos to view African Americans as their competitors. Overall, we find evidence that Latinos perceive less competition with Blacks, than they do with fellow Latinos, and that in particular, immigrants, especially from Mexico perceive the least amount of competition with Blacks, and that Latinos in Los Angeles do not perceive more or less competition than others in California. We argue that scholars should be careful in how they measure competition, tension, conflict, and should take a holistic approach to assessing Black-Brown relations.

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Introduction

During the 1970s and 1980s Blacks and Latinos appeared close to forming a “rainbow coalition” that would work for the political and social benefit of both groups. Large metropolitan cities with sizable minority populations like New York, Denver, and Los Angeles saw Black-Brown coalitions to elect African-American and Latino mayors and continuing cooperation seemed to be in the best interest of both groups. In Los Angeles, Latinos were brought into the Bradley coalition over time and became important partners in electing African Americans to office in California. In Colorado, Blacks alongside Hispanics were a big part of the coalition to elect Peña as mayor of Denver. However, in recent years the possibility of a rainbow coalition has come into question, largely as a result of the rapid growth in the Latino population which has doubled from 20 to 40 million since 1980. Latinos have now surpassed Blacks as the largest minority group in the United States and many have argued that cooperation has given way to conflict based on real and perceived competition for resources between Blacks and Latinos.

California presents an interesting test of this theory of conflict between Latinos and Blacks. With the largest Latino population in the US and the largest Black population of all the western states, the potential for competition and/or conflict between the groups seems high. There anecdotally seems to be some evidence of conflict, at least in the political arena. In 2001, Blacks uniformly voted against the Latino mayoral candidate in Los Angeles, in 1994 they backed Proposition 187, and Black workers even worked aggressively against the enforcement of equal opportunity laws for Latinos in L.A. (Vaca, 2004). This suggests that Latinos in California may see Blacks as direct competition for political or social resources.

There is some support for intergroup conflict between Latinos and Blacks outside of the Californian context. McClain et. al.'s 2006 article on intergroup conflict in North Carolina found that Latinos did not trust African Americans and political coalitions were unlikely. Kamasaki and Yzaguirre (1994) have argued that Latinos are chronically underrepresented at the federal, state, and local levels and that some Latinos believe that Black leaders invoke solidarity on issues of mutual concern but use their political power to advance Black interests over mutual ones. Multi-city studies have also found that Latinos are politically disadvantaged in cities with Black majorities or pluralities and that increases in the Black population has a negative effect on Latino non-poverty levels, education, and income (McClain and Karnig, 1990; McClain and Tauber, 1998). In a detailed study of intergroup attitudes in Houston, Mindiola et. al. (2002) found that Latinos held more negative stereotypes about Blacks than vice versa and also that they were much cooler toward the idea of interracial dating and marriage than Blacks, suggesting that prejudice exists in the Latino community toward Blacks. However, it is not clear if these findings can be generalized to the case of California. Furthermore it is unclear whether Latinos actually perceive of Blacks as threats to their group position and if so exactly what kind of threat they are seen to be.

In this paper we argue that findings pointing to conflict tend to misrepresent this variable and that a new measure is needed to accurately assess Black-Brown relations. To this end we have designed new measures utilizing the Latino National Survey (LNS) to standardize Latino perceptions of competition with Blacks in California. Our analysis intends to shed some light on the exact areas of perceived competition by looking at Latino perceptions across several sociopolitical arenas in California, including access to jobs, education and schools, city and state government employment and achieving political representation. By examining these individual

level factors across each specific arena, we can determine how context shapes Latino perceptions of competition with African Americans. Additionally, this study represents an improvement over past studies in that it compares the perceived competition with Blacks with the perceived level of competition with other Latinos, which allows us to separate racially-based threats from those based simply on a general sense of competition.

By examining a host of individual level factors, we can determine how context shapes Latinos perceptions of conflict with African Americans. The LNS also provides the advantage of isolating Latino perceptions of competition with African Americans, while accounting for perceptions of overall competition. We believe that this is critical. Much of the previous literature has suggested that Latinos maintain negative attitudes toward Blacks, including the perception of African Americans as economic competitors. However, we contend that it is necessary to take into account the propensity of Latinos to view *all* groups as competitors – including co-ethnics. With the ability to test this theory through the LNS, we believe we can provide some needed clarity to the coalition politics literature.

McClain et. al.'s (2006) study represented an important new area of research given the rapid growth of the Latino immigrant population, often in urban areas with large Black populations. However, the McClain et. al. (2006) study was limited to mostly Mexican immigrants in one Southern city, with the entire Latino sample being less than 200. Additionally, the Latino population in McClain et. al.'s study was a relatively young one, having grown by approximately 7% between 1990 and 2000. The dynamics of competition between Latinos and Blacks in California are likely to differ from McClain et. al.'s findings because these groups have long had contact with one another and in the case of Los Angeles even been political partners. Through the rich sample sizes of the LNS we intend to provide a more

complete picture of Latinos attitudes toward African Americans in California, which will include a detailed analysis of the Afro-Latino population in the United States, allowing us situate California in the wider context of national Black-Brown relations.

Competition and Inter-Group Attitudes Between Latinos and African Americans

According to Blalock (1967), competition between minority groups occurs when they strive for the same finite objectives so that success for one reduces the probability that the other will gain its goals. This has been defined as the zero-sum game of politics. Scholars have found that Latinos and African Americans often find themselves in this competitive situation. For example, Latinos have been found to make less progress in terms of socio-economic well being and political power in cities with Black majorities or pluralities (McClain and Karnig, 1990). Further, biracial coalitions are less likely to occur when one group maintains a class or power advantage over the other (Giles and Evans, 1986; McClain and Karnig, 1990; Browning et. al, 1990). This situation is reinforced by conditions associated with residential concentration of Latinos and African Americans (deteriorated living conditions, lack of services, lack of viable employment etc.), placing members of these groups in direct competition with one another for access to limited resources, jobs, and government representation (Alozie and Ramirez, 1999; Kerr, Miller, and Reid, 2000; Betancur and Gills, 2000). Therefore it seems as though the changing demographics of the last half-century have provided the background for intensified competition between Latinos and African Americans, particularly in areas like Los Angeles with large populations of both groups.

Research in the area of racial and ethnic interactions and intra-group attitudes has been focused almost exclusively on how African American's view Latinos (but for, Pantoja and Lopez 2004). This work has been particularly interested in how these attitudes might impact coalitions

between the groups, with many finding evidence that feelings of distrust and hostility toward Latinos among Blacks has prevented political alliances between the two groups (Bobo and Massagli, 2001; Bobo et al., 1994; Dyer, Vedlitz, and Worchel, 1989; Mindiola, Neimann, and Rodriguez, 2002). Despite this prevailing view, Pastor and Marcelli (2004) find that Blacks in Los Angeles are "ambiguous" in their views towards Latino immigrants, and in fact view Latinos as political allies more so than as economic competitors.

However, an emerging literature is developing that focuses on Latinos' attitudes toward African Americans. Among this scholarship, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) find that Latinos are surpassed only by African Americans in their propensity to view other racial/ethnic groups as competitors. In addition to perceptions of competition, scholarship in this area has also suggested that Latinos tend to harbor negative stereotypes of African Americans. For instance, Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn (1997) find that a majority of Asian Americans and a large percentage of Latinos view Blacks as less intelligent and more welfare dependent than their own groups. Similarly, the McClain et al. (2006) study of Latinos in North Carolina found that the stereotypes of Blacks by Latinos are more negative than those of Whites. Specifically, nearly 57% of Latinos in this study felt that few or almost no Blacks could be trusted, and nearly 59% believed that few or almost no Blacks are hard working (McClain et al., 2006, 578). Particularly when contrasted with the significantly less negative perceptions of Whites in the study, it appears as though Latinos (at least those in N.C.) do not have strong feelings of commonality with Blacks. This supports earlier work that suggests both African Americans and Latinos feel closer to Whites than to each other (Dyer, Vedlitz, and Worchel, 1989). In a comparative study, Pantoja and Lopez (2004) find splits between White and Black attitudes towards programs like affirmative action, but Latinos and Asians are positioned somewhere in the middle. Interestingly, a recent

study by Gonzalez (2008) found that Blacks in Washington actually held some of the most liberal views regarding immigration policy, with Blacks significantly more likely to favor amnesty or a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants than Whites. Blacks were also more likely to strongly disagree that immigration is changing the culture of the U.S. for the worse. The liberal views held by Blacks in Washington towards immigration policy suggest that the question of inter-group relations is a much more complicated one than it is typically portrayed as.

We expand on this research by analyzing the overall perceptions of competition, and racial identification on Latino's perceptions of competition with African Americans in California, where there is a large Latino population that also has a long history of working alongside Blacks both socially and politically. With rising Latino populations throughout the country what must be taken into consideration is not only how a newly established population such as those in McClain et. al's (2006) study perceive of competition with Blacks but also how this differs for larger, more established populations.

Group Threat

Theoretically this study is based on Blumer's (1958) group position theory, which is also often referred to as group threat theory. Blumer argued that prejudice was composed of four dimensions: a feeling of superiority, a belief the subordinate group is in some way intrinsically different or alien, a sense of entitlement to certain privileges or advantages, and finally a suspicion that the subordinate group is a threat to these privileges or advantages (Blumer, 1958).

Blumer's model seemed logical for dominant/subordinate relations but he never addressed how his theory would function for two groups occupying similar social positions.

Hubert Blalock filled in some of the gaps that were left unaddressed in Blumer's model by specifically focusing on minority group relations (Blalock, 1967). He argued that competition between minority groups occurs when they strive for the same finite objectives so that success for one reduces the probability that the other will attain its goals.

Bobo and Hutchings (1996) further expanded on Blumer's model to make it applicable in a multiracial context and expand it beyond the White/non-White dichotomy. Using data from the 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey (LACSS) Bobo and Hutchings tested self-interest, prejudice, and stratification belief models in addition to Blumer's. They argued that racial alienation played a role in perceived threat, with those groups who feel more alienated more likely to perceive other minority groups as a threat. Because Blumer's model recognized three of these dimensions (social stratification, prejudice, and self-interest) and could easily be expanded to include the fourth (racial alienation) it was found to be the most parsimonious theory for explaining prejudice as a result of group threat. Bobo and Hutchings tested perceived competition across four dimensions: political, housing based, job based, and economic. They found that alienation did increase perceived threat for Latinos¹ and that in addition to social stratification beliefs, prejudice, and self-interest also had effects.

Bobo built upon this earlier work with Hutchings in 1999. In this article Bobo provided evidence that greater feelings of subordination led to greater racial alienation, which in turn led to a greater sense of competition with other minority groups. Bobo also found that forty percent of Blacks and Latinos tended to see competition in zero-sum terms and that when assessing threat a host of variables had to be taken into account. These included the economic resources of the group, the specific social domain in question, and the prior history, overtness, and intensity

¹ Black had the highest level of racial alienation, followed by Latinos and Asian, who differed little from one another.

of conflict between minority groups. This is largely in line with Blumer's (1956) argument that a group's sense of social standing was predicated on a number of historical factors.

Black-Brown Relations in California

However, questions remain regarding how group threat operates for Latinos specifically in the Californian context. As mentioned earlier, there have been conflicts between Blacks and Latinos over mayoral candidates, state laws, and equal opportunities in the past that could serve as a basis for perceived competition. Yet there are few studies exploring Latino feelings of inter-group competition with Blacks, with most studies focusing instead on the Black perceptions of competition or threat from Latinos. For instance, Earl Ofari Hutchinson (2007) cites a 2006 Pew Study that found that Blacks were more likely to believe that a family member lost or did not get a job because an immigrant worker was hired instead. This may be a real rather than imagined threat based on the findings of Waldinger (1997) who found evidence that employers in Los Angeles were more open to employing Latino immigrant workers over Blacks due to more negative evaluations of Blacks as a group. Erin Kaplan (2007) writing in the *Los Angeles Times* argues that Blacks are tired of being conflated with Latinos and there is competition between the groups but this is largely one-sided. Blacks are expected to "minimize their identity and self-interest to join a new ethnic order" where Latinos are the majority. In an earlier article for the same paper Kaplan (2006b) also points out that Blacks feel as if they are being pushed out of formerly African American neighborhoods by Latino immigrants who also take jobs that were formerly filled by Blacks. However this perception does not always square with reality. Pastor and Marcelli (2004) note that public opinion among Blacks does not necessarily view Latino

immigrants as competitors and that Latino immigrants do not crowd Blacks out of service level jobs.

Perceptions of competition between Blacks and Latinos are no doubt driven, at least in part, by the large demographic shifts in the minority population of Los Angeles that began in the 1960s with the accelerating growth of the Latino community. By the 1970 Census Latinos had surpassed Blacks as the largest minority population in the city of Los Angeles at 19%, although Blacks were a close second at 17%. However, the growth rate of the Latino population increased substantially and by 2000 they represented 40% of the population of Los Angeles. Over this same period of time, the population of Blacks in Los Angeles declined to 11% (Sonenshein & Pinkus, 2002). The demographic increase alone would suggest the possibility of increased competition between Latinos and Blacks for economic or social resources but Sonenshein and Pinkus also note that the number of Latinos who have voted in the mayoral elections has increased from 10% in the 1993 election to 22% in the 2001 election. While the Black vote share has also increased from 12 to 17 percent, the declining Black population of Los Angeles suggests that even that any future increases will likely be modest while the Latino vote share is likely to grow at a much more rapid pace as more individuals within this traditionally young demographic reach voting age.

The increasing vote share of the Latino community suggests that beyond competition for economic or social resources there is the possibility of increased political competition between Latinos and Blacks in Los Angeles. Sonenshein and Pinkus point out that no multiracial coalition stepped in to replace the Bradley coalition of Blacks and Jews that had kept the mayor in office for twenty years with the support of the Latino community. Instead they acknowledge that Los Angeles could see a two-headed minority movement, with both Blacks and Latinos

representing substantial enough voting blocks to make for attractive coalition partners for both each other and/or Whites. The result is a more complicated political scene and one where the possibility of political competition exists. However, this competition does not seem to have surfaced so far at the mayoral level and the election in 2005 of Antonio Villaraigosa may suggest a return to coalitional politics in Los Angeles.

There is evidence that Latinos may also see Blacks as a threat in California. In a 2002 survey David Sears found that Latinos reported themselves to be in conflict with Blacks more often than with any other ethnic group. However, this was largely based on gangs and crime rather than social or political competition, with 76% reporting gangs and crime as the source of intergroup conflict, compared to 48% who saw jobs and income as a cause of conflict (Sears, 2002). Crime was also found to have an effect on Latino perceptions of Blacks in a national New America Media poll that was reported by Kristin Bender in a 2007 *Inside Bay Area* article, where 44% of Latinos reported being afraid of Blacks because they were responsible for most of the crime.

A forthcoming study by Mark Sawyer based on the 2007 LACSS found that Latinos were coolest toward Asians, followed by Blacks, and overwhelmingly felt the latter preferred welfare to work and were involved in drugs and crime. Furthermore, Latinos were also significantly less likely than Blacks to report political commonality between the groups, with only 27.6% of Latinos believing this while 40.7% of Blacks believed that the two groups had political commonality. Tanya Hernandez (2007) reports that Latinos prefer to maintain a social distance from Blacks and listed them as their least desirable marriage partners, which may indicate Latino prejudice against Blacks.

Oliver and Wong (2003) found that there were differences in perceived competition with Blacks in Los Angeles and Boston. In L.A. Latinos were much more likely to report intergroup competition with Blacks than Latinos living in Boston. Furthermore, those Latinos living in less heterogeneous neighborhoods in Los Angeles were more likely to harbor negative stereotypes of Blacks and to have perceptions of zero sum competition with Blacks. Increases in the Latino population in California has also driven conflict with Blacks according to Betancur (2005), who notes that competitive tension is driven by different agendas regarding immigration, bilingual education, and job opportunities. Finally, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) found that preferred social distance and racial alienation both increased the perceived competition from Blacks in Los Angeles County.

All of these findings suggest that Latinos harbor some negative attitudes of Blacks and may see them as competitors in some cases. Yet the picture is not as clear as it may seem. A 2007 report (Guerra et al., 2007) from the Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University found that Latinos listed race relations between Latinos and Blacks as a lesser threat (23%) than either global warming (38%) or traffic (40%). This suggests that there may be issues of salience in regards to Black-Latino competition, at least in regards to how this is reported in surveys. If this report had only asked about Black-Latino relations 23% would have seemed like a relatively large number, but when it is placed in context it is shown to be of lesser concern than everyday concerns like the environment or gridlock.

Yet, these previous studies do not compare Latinos' perceived threat from Blacks with that of threats from other Latinos. As is often pointed by Latino scholars and politicians, the Latino community is far from a homogeneous one, being composed of a variety of ethnic groups as well as established Latino-American communities and communities of recent immigrants. By

examining the perceived threat from Blacks alongside the perceived threat from other Latinos we can assess whether group threat is racially-based or is based more generally on a sense of competition. Without looking at perceived intra-group competition in California it is difficult to assess how racially motivated inter-group competition actually is.

Scholars have also noted that competition can extend to other segments of the political environment, including political representation and the drawing of electoral districts (Meier and Stewart 1991; Gay, 2001). For example, election results from 118 large multiracial school districts indicate that when Latino population increases, Blacks lose political representation (Meier and Stewart 1991). Further, Claudine Gay finds that African-American voter turnout is lowest in districts that have a majority Latino population (Gay, 2001). Elsewhere, as the Latino population has increased, some majority-Black districts have turned majority-Latino.

There is clearly political competition between Latinos and Blacks, however we question whether this competition is salient to the general population, or only those most attuned to the political dynamics in these communities. We contend that concern for the relative level of political representation, and for government specific jobs may only be relevant to the segment of the Latino community most interested and concerned with politics. For example, Latinos continue to vote overwhelmingly for Black congressional candidates in California, Texas, and New York even as the Latino population outnumbers the Black population. Rather than all-out conflict, Latinos typically support African American candidates for office.

One recent example highlights the possibility of both conflict and cooperation in the same district. In 2006 when the 34th congressional district in California held a special election, the two candidates competing over the seat were a Black woman, and a Latina. The district population was almost exactly split between Blacks and Latinos. In the primary, voters

supported their co-ethnic candidate, in a very close and bitterly fought campaign. When the African American candidate emerged victorious, some pundits questioned whether Latinos would go on to support her in the general election, or in future elections. Despite almost universal support for the Latina candidate in the primary, Latino voters quickly backed the Black candidate in the general election, and in all subsequent elections.

The Impact of Relative Perceptions of Competition in Latinos Attitudes Toward Blacks

The LNS provides the opportunity to account for Latinos' perceptions of competition with Blacks *relative* to perceptions of competition with other groups – including other Latinos. Previous work has found Latinos to have high perceptions of conflict and competition with African Americans.

However, this research has not been able to control for general perceptions of conflict and/or competition. We contend that while it is plausible that Latinos in California maintain high levels of competition with Blacks, this trend may be tempered by perceptions of competition in general - including internal competition. Research interested in the contextual determinants of racial animosity among Whites has found that individuals faced with economic adversity tend to not only exhibit a generic distrust of out-groups, but also feelings of relative deprivation, anxiety, and alienation (Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000). Similarly, African Americans in urban ghettos tend to have a “deep suspicion of the motives of others, a marked lack of trust in the benevolent intentions of people and institutions” (Massey and Denton, 1993: 172). Gay (2004) has also found that African Americans living in low-income neighborhoods tend to believe that racism limits their individual life chances, as well as the overall socio-economic attainment of blacks as

a group. We contend that it is likely that Latinos, primarily those who are foreign-born, may have similar worldviews marked with perceptions of competition.

During the 1980's many of the nation's major cities went through rapid demographic transformations while government cutbacks left new immigrants and older residents in poor sections of these cities directly engaged in competition for scarce resources (Jones-Correa, 2001). The upward concentration of wealth in the U.S. in the last two decades has been coupled with declines in real wages and lack of investments in urban neighborhoods, putting the Black and Latino working class in a disadvantaged position (Jennings, 2003). Not surprisingly, foreign-born Latinos have been found to perceive greater competition with African Americans than their native born counterparts (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Rodrigues et al., 2004; Jones-Correa, 2001; McClain et al. 2006).² However, we contend that this trend does not necessarily reflect hostility toward Blacks among Latinos, but possibly a more general worldview that includes high perceptions of competition. Thus, Latinos in California may be just as likely (if not more likely) to perceive competition with other Latinos as they do with Blacks. By accounting for this important trend, we are able to isolate competitive attitudes towards African Americans from competitive perceptions more generally. Testing of the two specific hypotheses will add significantly to our working knowledge of not only coalition politics among Latinos and African Americans in California, but the nature of internal competition among Latinos as well.

² The McClain et al. (2006) study also confirms the role of nativity in Latinos attitudes toward African Americans, as approximately 93% of the sample utilized in this study is foreign-born. However, this study suggests that this trend may be a result of Latino immigrants arriving in the U.S. with negative stereotypes regarding blacks that were formulated in their country of origin. In fact, a sizable literature focused on discrimination and racial stereotypes in Latin America is cited to address this issue (de la Cadena, 2001; Dulitzky, 2005; Guimareas, 2001; Hanchard, 1994; Mörner, 1967; Sweet, 1997; Wade, 1993, 1997; Winant, 1992).

Data and Methods

As previously noted, the data for this study are from the 2006 Latino National Survey (LNS). The LNS is a "national" telephone survey of 8,600 Latino residents of the United States, that seeks a broad understanding of the qualitative nature of Latino political and social life in America. In this chapter, we focus primarily on the data from California including 1,200 interviews with Latino respondents. The universe for the survey was all adult Latinos (18 years of age and older), with surveys conducted in the preferred language of the respondent (English, Spanish or both languages).

With the ability to account for perceptions of competition across various contexts as well as the ability to analyze perceptions of competition with African Americans relative to other Latinos, the LNS is the only dataset available to address the research questions driving this analysis. To take advantage of the unique approach and rich sample sizes of the LNS, we implement a wide range of statistical analyses in order to provide a comprehensive investigation of Latino perception of social and political competition. The first stage of the analysis consists of a series of descriptive statistics to determine the degree to which Latinos perceive African Americans to be competitors for economic and political resources relative to the perceived competition with other Latinos. Because of the large overall sample size in the LNS, we are able to observe statistically significant relationships between Latinos in Los Angeles and elsewhere in California and this serves as a starting point for the presentation of our results.

We then present results from multivariate regression models to test a host of explanatory variables on overall perceptions of Black-Brown competition in California. In particular, we are interested in whether or not Latinos in the city of Los Angeles are more, or less likely to view competition with Blacks than elsewhere in California.

Variable Construction

One of the most important contributions in this chapter is the construction of the dependent variables. Most studies cited above rely on a single measure or an index of Black-Brown conflict that focus on how Latinos perceive Blacks, or how Blacks perceive Latinos. However a Latino respondent's perception of Blacks alone is meaningless without perceptions of a comparison group. In this study, we construct a relative measure of Black-Brown competition based on how much competition Latinos perceive with African Americans, compared to how much competition they see with other Latinos. For example, if the dependent variable was social trust, and on a 0 – 10 scale a respondent assigned trust in Blacks a value of 3, on its face that would appear to be very low, and may appear to represent an “anti-Black” attitude. However, if we asked the same respondent, how much they trust other Latinos, and they also reported a value of 3, the full context illustrates that the attitudes are not anti-Black, but rather the person has low levels of trust in general, for both their own in-group and an out-group. Almost every previous study of Black-Brown conflict has relied on a single measure of positive or negative viewpoints towards just one group, either towards Blacks or towards Latinos. In this project, we take advantage of two series of questions within the LNS and create a relative measure of Black-Brown competition, a significant improvement in understanding race relations.

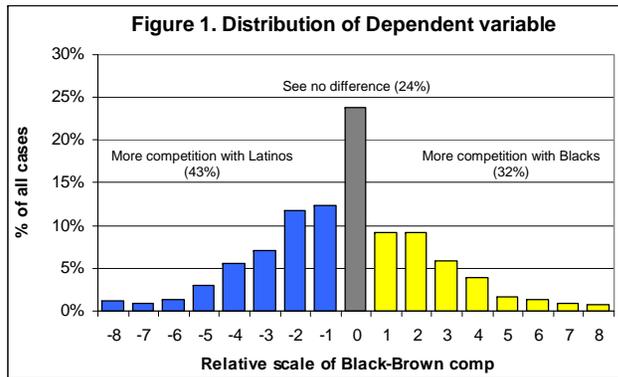
First, respondents were asked, “Some have suggested that Latinos are in competition with African-Americans. After each of the next items, would you tell me if you believe there is strong competition, weak competition, or no competition at all with African-Americans? How about...”

1. In getting jobs
2. Having access to education and quality schools
3. Getting jobs with the city or state government
4. Having Latino representatives in elected office

From these four questions, we created an overall index of competition with African Americans, as well as four dependent variables, one for each domain of competition. However, this is only half of the story. We are interested in knowing whether the perceived competition is a unique Brown vs. Black phenomenon, or if competition is also perceived with other Latinos. Thus, we used the exact same series of questions asked later on the survey, with respect to competition among Latinos: “Some have suggested that [insert country of ancestry³] are in competition with other Latinos. After each of the next items, would you tell me if you believe there is strong competition, weak competition, or no competition at all with other Latinos...” and the same four items were used, jobs, education, government jobs, and elected representation. By combining the Black competition index, with the Latino competition index, we are able to arrive at an overall relative measure of Black-Brown competition.

The combined index ranges from -8 to +8 (Figure 1) where a value of -8 represents “high competition” with Latinos and “low competition” with Blacks. In contrast, a value of +8 represents “high competition” with Blacks and “low competition” with Latinos. Respondents who had the same value for both groups, regardless of what that value was, are scored as a zero because they see no difference in the amount of competition between Blacks and Latinos. The basic frequencies of the full sample depicted in Figure1 strongly suggest that this measure provides a much clearer picture of Black-Brown competition.

³ For example, the question might have read, “Some have suggested that Puerto Ricans are in competition with other Latinos. After each of the next items, would you tell me if you believe there is strong competition, weak competition, or no competition at all with other Latinos....



We rely on a variety of well-known, and some new independent variables in predicting Black-Brown competition. Standard demographic variables include age, education, income, gender, marital status and homeownership. Here, we are particularly interested in class-based variables such as income, and also evaluation of personal financial situation, and employment status. We also include many standard ethnic variables to test cultural-based hypotheses, which include religion (Catholic), immigrant generation, immigrant neighborhood, Spanish usage, Latino linked fate, importance of maintaining Latino culture, and identification as American. With respect to political variables, we include interest in politics, a political knowledge index, and party identification. (Complete coding instructions for all independent variables can be found in the appendix.)

The last grouping of variables is the least familiar, yet the most interesting in this analysis. Several variables related to the social interaction, contact, and association with African Americas are included, to determine whether or not exposure to the Black community has a

positive or negative impact on how Latinos view competition with Blacks. The first of these variables is called Black skin, and is a dummy variable for whether or not the Latino respondent described themselves as having very dark, or dark skin, a very interesting question that has rarely been included on surveys of Latinos, even as scholars are promoting similar research in Latin America on skin color (see Sawyer 2004; 2005). Next, two variables related to social interactions, Black friends and Black workers are included as dummies and measure whether the respondent's friends or co-workers are mostly Black, or mixed Black and Latino. In contrast to these two social interaction variables, two additional variables relate to self-reported negative experiences with African Americans, whether the respondent has been victim of a crime, or experienced discrimination by an African American. Finally, two variables measure how much Latinos feel they have in common with Blacks. Two questions asked Latinos how much they had in common with other racial groups on social and political issues. Black commonality is based just on the responses to how much in common with Blacks, and ranks the relative placement of Blacks on the 1 – 8 scale, given how the respondent rated each other group. So if a Latino respondent had 5 out of 8 in common with Blacks, but had 4 of 8 for Asians, 3 of 8 for Whites, and 6 of 8 for other Latinos, Blacks would be “ranked” second in terms of commonality.

Finally, we control for the percentage of the population that is Black within the city in which the Latino respondent resides to test whether or not population dynamics contribute to feelings of competition. For example, Latinos in cities with a very small Black population may not see much competition with Blacks, because they do not come into frequent contact, whereas Latinos residing in majority-Black cities may see Blacks as their competitors. At least, this has been the proposed theory by journalistic accounts in California. We test this through the inclusion of two population variables, percent Black, and percent Black-squared (as of the 2006

US Census Current Population Survey), the latter being included because population is unlikely to hold a simple linear relationship. In full, we employ seven variables specifically related to race.

The Results

The first set of results is a comparison of mean averages for the Black-Brown competition dependent variable. Using the relative competition variable, we compare the mean level of competition perceived by several different geographic subgroups of Latinos. A negative mean value demonstrates that the group perceives more competition with other Latinos, while mean values greater than zero demonstrate that the group perceives more competition with African Americans – as depicted in Figure 1 above. Table 1 reports bivariate means for Latinos across different geographies, as well as across generation. As a point of comparison, we provide the overall average score for the national LNS sample at the bottom, which registers as -0.18.

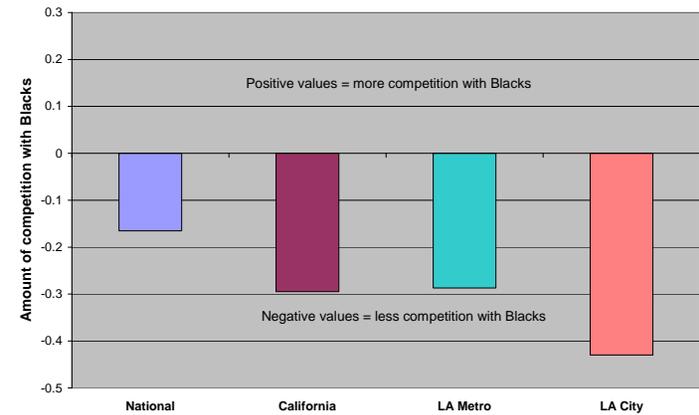
Table 1: Perceived Black-Brown Competition, Comparison of Means

Variable	Index of perceived competition
California	-0.2949
Rest of the U.S.	-0.1648
L.A. Metro area	-0.2867
Other part of CA	-0.3022
L.A. city	-0.4303
CA – foreign born	-0.4014
CA – second gen	-0.0339
CA – third gen	0.0345
CA – fourth gen	0.0571
Total LNS Sample	-0.1829

For California, the degree of Black-Brown competition is actually lower, at -.29 suggesting Latinos in the Golden State view even less competition with Blacks than Latinos elsewhere in the United States. Further, there is no validity to the claim that competitive tension

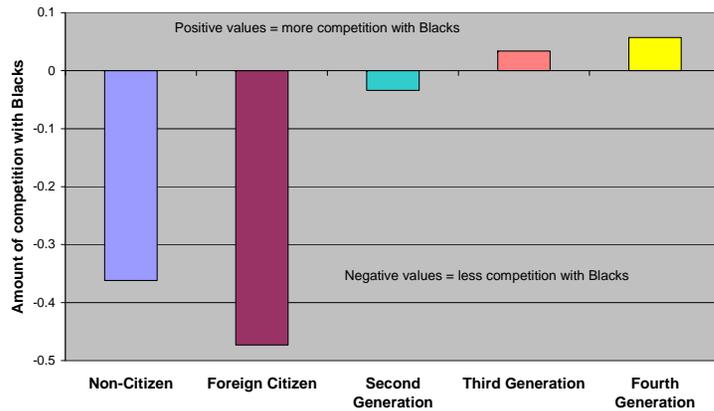
is particularly high in Los Angeles as compared to the rest of the state. First, the LA Metro area (the counties of LA, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura) has a mean competition level of -0.29, compared to -0.30 for the rest of California. Further, looking just to the city of Los Angeles, we find that Latinos here have an even lower degree of perceived competition with Blacks, -0.43. These results make it clear that Latinos in Los Angeles (and California) do not perceive overwhelming competition with Blacks.

Figure 2. Perception of Black-Brown Competition (mean) by Region



Finally, while some previous research suggests immigrants are more likely to hold anti-Black attitudes (McClain et. al. 2006), we find a clear linear pattern whereby the foreign-born perceive the least amount of competition with Blacks, which increases slowly through the fourth generation U.S.-born segment of the population. Latino immigrants in California have an average competition score of -0.40, compared to a positive score of 0.057 by the fourth generation. The fourth generation average is still low (recall that it varies from -8 to +8) but the positive value suggests that by the fourth generation, Latinos may perceive, on balance, Blacks as their competitors. In contrast to McClain et. al (2006) who argue that pre-existing notions of anti-Black attitudes preoccupy new arrivals from Latin America, the much more exhaustive dataset from the LNS dismisses the notion of Latino immigrants perceiving competition with African Americans in California.

Figure 3. Perception of Black-Brown Competition in California by Immigrant Generation



Building on the bivariate comparison of means, we next move to a multivariate regression analysis in which we test four key hypotheses through a more rigorous set of analyses. Here, we look for statistically significant results related to resource competition (income and education), political awareness, acculturation, and Black social context. Table 2 contains results for two ordinary least squares regressions using the four-item index of combined Black-Brown competition. The first regression in column 1 uses the non-relative measure of competition, that is, only perceived competition with Blacks, without taking perceived competition with Latinos into account. The second regression in column 2 is our primary interest, and uses the relative measure of competition and ranges from -8 to +8. We encourage readers to compare the relative measure of competition across the two regressions, and focus more heavily on the second column..

Among the resource and lifecycle variables, age demonstrates a positive and significant relationship in both models. This suggests that older Latinos are the most likely to view competition with Blacks in California, and that the younger cohorts are unlikely to view competition. Again, this finding stands in contrast the media’s sensationalizing of Black-Brown conflict among young people in the schools of Los Angeles. Though our data does not include individuals under eighteen, the trend in the data does not support this claim whatsoever. If Latinos had stronger feelings of competition with Blacks when in school, there is no reason to expect that this would suddenly decline when they reached eighteen. Additionally, no relationship is found with income, rejecting the hypothesis that lower-income Latinos would see more competition with Blacks. Instead, we find that those who perceive their personal financial situation to be improving tend to see somewhat higher competition with Blacks in California.

Table 2: Predictors of Black-Brown Competition among Latinos in CA

	Competition with Blacks		Relative Competition	
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Age	0.0134	0.0064 *	0.0147	.0069 *
Education	-0.0015	0.0254	-0.0156	0.0273
Income	-6.0e-06	6.3e-06	-2.7e-06	6.8e-06
Finances Better	0.1948	0.1218	0.4558	0.1310 ***
Unemployed	0.3008	0.3097	0.4141	0.3331
Female	-0.1919	0.1777	0.0791	0.1911
Married	-0.0939	0.1829	-0.3194	0.1967
Home owner	-0.0626	0.2099	-0.0297	0.2257
Catholic	0.1017	0.2014	0.3272	0.2168
Generation	0.1436	0.1087	-0.0017	0.1169
Spanish (scale)	0.0777	0.0929	-0.0934	0.0999
Spanish Hood	0.1586	0.1006	0.0854	0.1082
Linked fate – Latino	0.1819	0.0933 *	-0.1171	0.1005
American ID	0.2801	0.0914 ***	-0.1182	0.0983
Maintain culture	0.5319	0.1679 ***	0.0170	0.1806
Pol Knowledge	-0.0221	0.0915	0.0818	0.0984
Party (7 point)	0.0166	0.0525	-0.0515	0.0565
Black Skin	-0.1187	0.2666	-0.5402	0.2868 †
Black Friends	-0.0747	0.4215	-0.5324	0.4533
Black Workers	0.2337	0.5299	0.2967	0.5699
Black Crime	-0.5617	0.5195	0.0552	0.5589
Black Discrimination	-0.1425	0.5164	-0.3221	0.5554
Black Commonality	0.1280	0.0487 **	0.1023	0.0524 *
City of L.A.	0.3816	0.2794	-0.2615	.3006
Black population	0.0517	0.0334	0.0794	0.0359 *
Black pop-squared	-0.0021	0.0011 †	-0.0020	0.0011 †
Constant	2.392	1.065 *	-1.454	1.146
N	952		952	
Adj R-sqr	.0378		.0169	

Moving to the next set of cultural variables, the two regressions show different results.

First, Latinos with a high sense of linked fate with other Latinos, as well as those who feel it is important to maintain a clear Latino culture, appear to perceive more competition with Blacks in column 1. However, notice that this relationship does not hold in column 2 where we provide our better developed measure of Black-Brown competition. A strong ethnic identity, as measured by a sense of linked fate and the perceived importance of Latino culture, does not have any effect on perceptions of competition with Blacks when competition with other Latinos is also taken in

to account. Further, looking to other variables such as language and Catholicism, it is clear that cultural differences are not contributing to perceptions of competition with Blacks in California. None of these variables are statistically significant in our relative measure in column 2. And although immigrant generation showed significant results in the bivariate analysis reported above in table 1, once additional control variables are considered, we find no statistically significant relationship between generation and Black-Brown competition.

Finally, we turn our attention to a series of race-related variables, which are particularly relevant to understanding Black-Brown competition. Latinos with self-reported dark skin were in fact less likely to see Blacks as their competitors, according to the negative coefficient results in column 2. This is a particularly interesting result, and suggests that darker-skinned Latinos in California may be racialized by the larger White population in such a way that it causes them to view a sense of commonality and connection with African Americans. However, our results for Black commonality suggest the opposite. Latinos who believe they have much in common with Blacks also tend to view more competition with Blacks in California. This should give us pause in how we interpret a measure such as ‘shared commonality’ because it may not imply a partnership or coalition, but rather, that these two minority groups correctly observe their social circumstances are quite similar, which could lead to more perceived competition.

Last, we want to focus on the findings from the Black population variables. Looking to column 2, we note that the two variables are both statistically significant, yet they have opposite effects. This is a common phenomenon with non-linear relationships when a squared term is introduced. So, on the one hand as the percent Black goes up, competition also increases. However, the negative values on the squared term indicate that at some point, an n-shaped curve will emerge whereby a larger Black population actually decreases perceived competition. These

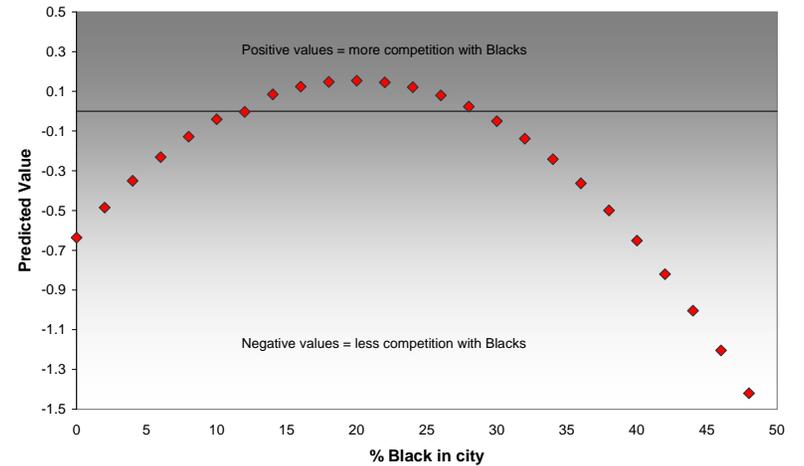
findings illustrate that increases in the Black population does lead to increases in perceptions of competition, as is suggested by the literature, but there is a tipping point after which further increases actually decrease the level of perceived competition. This is a fascinating finding, and suggests that while some population challenges exist, that large Black and Latino populations can co-exist with little competition. One potential explanation for this finding is that the level of integration of the Latino and Black communities increases after the Black population reaches a particular level as a result of necessary social interactions.

Because the regression coefficients are difficult to interpret on their face, we offer a graphical presentation of the population results below in figure 4. Again, controlling for the percent Black within the different cities in California, we test how Latinos living in each city will view competition with Blacks. The x-axis at the bottom of figure 4 measures the Black population in a city ranging from 0 to 50, while the y-axis on the left hand side measures the degree of competition with Blacks that our Latino respondents perceived to exist. Values below zero indicate Latinos do not see competition with Blacks, while values above zero represent perceived competition.

Moving from left to right, as the percent Black in a city increases, we witness a slow, but steady increase in perceive competition with Blacks by Latinos, however this slope levels off in cities that are about 20% Black, and then begins to decline much more rapidly as the Black population further increases. So in the presence of smaller African American populations, as the population increases from zero to 20% Black, Latinos do see more competition. However, this stands in stark contrast to the medium and heavily-Black populated cities, which actually report far, far lower levels of Black-Brown competition. One possible explanation for this n-curve could be that cities that are in the 15-25% Black range have witnessed rapid Latino population

growth and perhaps used to be 45-50% Black ten or twenty years ago. Therefore, some perceived competition exists on both sides due to the population replacement that has occurred, though our current data do not allow us to explicitly test this theory. In contrast, cities that maintain a large Black population have more successfully incorporated Latinos as partners leading Latinos to view very low levels of competition, as depicted in figure 4. This holds for cities with a Black population exceeding 40 or 50 percent as well.

Figure 4. Perception of Black-Brown Competition by Black Population Size



Looking to our statewide data, we note that in cities with small Black populations such as Anaheim, Santa Ana, and San Jose, Latinos do in fact view lower levels of competition. At the same time, Latinos residing in cities with the largest Black population such as Oakland, Inglewood, Richmond and Carson also have relatively low levels of competition with Blacks. In contrast, cities with medium-sized Black populations such as San Bernardino, Rialto, Lancaster,

and Moreno Valley tended to have Latinos who perceived higher rates of competition with Blacks. These same cities also had among the highest Latino population growth rates during the 1990s and 2000s, possibly creating more rapid displacement of Blacks by new Latino residents.

Conclusion

The 2008 presidential election highlighted the potential for conflict, and also cooperation between Latinos and Blacks. At the outset of the contest, misguided observers speculated that Latinos would not vote for a Black candidate due to simmering feelings of competition between the two minority groups. Indeed the primary election results in California pointed to huge losses for Barack Obama among Latino voters. However this sense of Black-Brown competition was both fabricated and exaggerated, as Latino voters preferred Hillary Clinton due to her high name recognition, extensive Latino outreach, and prominent endorsements from Latino officials (Barreto and Ramírez 2008; Barreto et. al 2008). Indeed, when the final votes were cast, the headlines proclaimed that Hispanic voters were a crucial component of the Obama coalition, delivering a 70% vote share to the Democrat, noticeably higher than the two previous White Democrats who ran for President.

Seven years earlier Latino mayoral candidate Antonio Villaraigosa received less than 20% of the Black vote and commentators were quick to point to Black-Brown competition through anecdotes and single examples. However it is now well known that in 2005 Villaraigosa received about half of the Black vote, and further increased his margin in 2009. An important rejoinder here is that we should focus on what the data tell us, and not what one or two opinionated columnists think. In this chapter, we have provided a comprehensive look at Latino public opinion towards African Americans, using data from the 2006 Latino National Survey,

focusing data from the state of California. In short, we find only a small minority of Latinos in California view competition with Blacks, and that in comparison, California, and especially Los Angeles, have even lower levels of perceived Black-Brown competition than elsewhere.

While the final election outcomes in November 2008 refuted the Latino-Black competition hypothesis with 70% of the Latino vote going to Obama, it drew considerable attention throughout the campaign cycle. In this chapter, we argue that claims of mounting competition over public policy, elected office, jobs and education are far overstated, at least from the perspective of Latinos in California. We demonstrate that traditional measures of Black-Brown competition are flawed because they lack a base of comparison. Using a relative measure of competition, we argue that Latinos actually view a higher degree of competition with fellow Latinos, and that perceived competition with Blacks is not emblematic of anti-Black sentiment.

More recent research in Los Angeles has concurred with these results, finding less conflict, and more cooperation between Latinos and Blacks (Guerra and Nuño 2007; Sawyer et. al. 2008). While Latinos may view a moderate degree of competition with Blacks, most also view a moderate degree of competition with fellow Latinos. Thus, the perceived competition is not racially motivated, but rather based on realistic observations of their political and social environments. At the same time that Latinos view some competition with African Americans, they also view a good deal of shared commonality and even a sense of linked fate with Blacks. If anything, the Obama campaign, and successful Latino outreach highlighted the possibility of a broad minority coalition, bringing together Latinos and Blacks over their shared interests.

As the Latino population continues to grow in California, quite often alongside the Black population, we encourage scholars to develop new, more precise measures of intergroup

relations. Whether we are measuring conflict or cooperation, we should not evaluate in-group/out-group attitudes in a vacuum, but rather using a relative methodology.

Finally, it is important to note that this chapter has only examined the viewpoints of Latinos towards perceived competition with Blacks. As Latinos now represent the largest minority group in America, surpassing African Americans in 30 states, it may be that Blacks actually view more competition with Latinos, than Latinos do with Blacks. While reliable data are an obstacle, future studies should examine both groups simultaneously to fully understand the dynamics of Black-Latino relations.

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Appendix A: Variable Construction

Independent Variables	Description
Age	Continuous; 18 – 98
Education	Categorical; 0=none; 4.5=less 8 th ; 10.5=some HS; 12=HS grad; 14.5=some college; 16=College grad; 18=graduate school
Income	Categorical with missing income replaced using income imputation
Finances Better	Personal financial situation; 1=worse; 2=same; 3=better
Unemployed	Dummy; 1=currently unemployed
Female	Dummy; 1=Female
Married	Dummy; 1=Married
Home owner	Dummy; 1=Home owner
Years address	Continuous; number of years lived at current address; 0 – 90
Catholic	Dummy; 1=Catholic
Generation	Categorical; 0=Foreign non-citizen; 1=Foreign citizen; 2=Second; 3=Third; 4=Fourth
Spanish (scale)	Categorical; 1=English only; 2=English, a little Spanish; 3=English, decent Spanish; 4=Fully Bilingual; 5=Spanish, decent English; 6=Spanish, a little English; 7=Spanish only
Spanish Hood	Index, see L23; 0=no Spanish services available in community; 1=1 of 3 services in Spanish; 2=2 of 3 services in Spanish; 3=3 of 3 services in Spanish
Pol Knowledge	Index, see J10, J11, J12; 0=0 of 3 correct; 1=1 of 3 correct; 2=2 of 3 correct; 3=3 of 3 correct
Party (7 point)	Categorical; 1=Strong Dem; 2=Weak Dem; 3=Lean Dem; 4=Indep; 5=Lean GOP; 6=Weak GOP; 7=Strong GOP
Black Skin	Dummy; 1=Self-identify as having very dark, or dark skin (see E16)
Black Friends	Dummy; 1=Friends are mostly Black, or mix of Black and Latino (see G6)
Black Workers	Dummy; 1=Co-workers are mostly Black, or mix of Black and Latino (see G7)
Black Crime	Dummy; 1=Victim of crime committed by Black (see L18 / L19)
Black Discrimination	Dummy; 1=Experienced discrimination by Black (see N2 / N4)
Black Commonality	Index, see G1A / G2A; 1=Nothing at all in common; 8=A lot in common
Linked fate – Latino	Categorical; 1=None; 2=Little; 3=Some; 4=Lot
American ID	Categorical; 1=Not at all; 2=Not strong; 3=Somewhat Strong; 4=Very strong
Maintain culture	Categorical; 1=Not at all; 2=Somewhat important; 3=Very important
Black population	Continuous; % Black among population in city where respondent lives
Black pop-squared	Exponential; Squared term of % Black among population
City of L.A.	Dummy; 1=resides in city of Los Angeles

Exposing Myths, Uncovering New Realities in Latino Attitudes Towards Blacks. In Black and Brown Los Angeles: Beyond conflict and coalition, ed. Laura Pulido and Josh Kun. Berkeley: University of California Press. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Barreto, Matt, Gabriel R. Sanchez, and Jason Morán. 2010. "Perceptions of Competition Between Latinos and Blacks: The Development of a Relative Measure of Inter-Group Competition." In Black-Brown Relations, ed. Edward Telles, Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, and Sylvia Zamora. New York: Russell Sage. 7 - Rainbow Coalition in the Golden State? Exposing Myths, Uncovering New Realities in Latino Attitudes toward Blacks 203. 8 - Race and the L.a. Human Race Relations and Violence in Globalized Los Angeles 233. Part Four - Reporting Black and Brown L.a. a Journalist's View 253. 9 - More Than Just the Latinos-Next-Door; Piercing Black Silence on Immigration; and Plugging Immigration's Drain on Black Employment 255. 10 - Race, Real Estate, and the Mexican Mafia :a Report from the Black and Latino Killing Fields 261. Part Five - City Cultures 299. Peer-reviewed publications on Questia are publications containing articles which were subject to evaluation for accuracy and substance by professional peers of the article's author(s).

7 Rainbow Coalition in the Golden State? Exposing Myths, Uncovering New Realities in Latino Attitudes toward Blacks. (pp. 203-232). MATT A. BARRETO, BENJAMIN F. GONZALEZ and GABRIEL R. SÁNCHEZ. Large metropolitan cities with sizable minority populations, like New York, Denver, and Los Angeles, saw Black-Brown coalitions to elect African American and Latino mayors, and continuing cooperation seemed to be in the best interest of both groups. In Los Angeles, Latinos were brought into the Bradley coalition over time and became important partners in electing African Americans to office in California. In Colorado, Blacks alongside Hispanics were a big part of the coalition Cite this Item.